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A

Discourse,

OCCASIONED

By the ſudden death of three Youn Perſons, by

DROWNING.

DELIVERED

On the 28th of May, 1797,

At the Baptiſt Meeting Houſe in *Bordenton*,

NEW JERSEY.

By the Rev. WILLIAM STAUGHTON,

PRINCIPAL OF BORDENTON ACADEMY.

To which is annexed, An

Oration,

Delivered the preceding evening at the Interment of t
Bodies,

By the Rev. BURGISS ALLISON, A. M.

Philadelphia:
PRINTED BY STEPHEN C. USTICK,
1797.

Discourse,

PSALM XC. Ver. 5, 6.

Thou carrieſt them away as with a flood; they are *as* a ſl[illegible] in the morning *they are* like graſs *which* groweth up.

In the morning it flouriſheth and groweth up; in the even[illegible] it is cut down, and withereth.

THE impreſſions with which we enter [illegible] the duties of this day, are unuſually intereſti[illegible]. The paſt evening, in the bitterneſs of grief, [illegible] committed to the duſt the remains of three yo[illegible] perſons, whom, from the circles of our acquaintan[illegible] providence hath ſuddenly removed.

Till the heavens *be* no more, *they* ſhall not awa[illegible] nor be raiſed out of their ſleep. Tears we h[illegible] ſhed, and ſtill, ſacred to their memory, tears in[illegible]luntarily fall.—At the grave of Lazarus, his ſleeping friend, Jeſus wept. But, while we indulge theſe innocent expreſſions of ſorrow, we would labor ſo to regard our afflictions and ſo to number our da[illegible]s, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.

Our ſubjection to the ſtroke of death is ſo certain and conſtant, that it were reaſonable to expect, that man would every moment ſtand prepared and waiting. But, the conſciouſneſs of immortality, which not iniquity itſelf can ſupplant, prevails over the idea of diſſolution, and renders an occaſional, ſolemn interpoſition of providence neceſſary for reminding us, that duſt is our original and that to duſt we muſt return.

Such an interpoſition addreſſes our attention this morning—ſuch an interpoſition occaſioned the

compoſition of the Pſalm, whence our text is ſelected. It is termed a "prayer of Moſes, the man of "God;" a title ſufficient of itſelf to engage our immediate attention.—The "prayers of Moſes" appear to have been anſwered in a more ſignal manner than thoſe of any "man of God," with whoſe hiſtory we are acquainted.—His prayer availed in removing the plagues from the land of Egypt, in dividing the ocean, in ſtaying the arm of the thunderer, when, at the foot of Sinai, Iſrael was paying homage to the calf, in producing water from the rock, in procuring redreſs from fiery ſerpents, and in aſſiſting the Hebrews to put thouſands to flight.

It is ſuppoſed this prayer was offered to God and written for the generations to come, when the Iſraelites had pitched their tents in the wilderneſs of Paran. This part of the Arabian deſart lying on the ſouthern border of the land of promiſe, and an expectation of an immediate poſſeſſion of the country prevailing through the camp; Moſes, commanded by the Lord, ſelected twelve men from the tribes of Iſrael, from every tribe a man, and commiſſioned them "to ſpy out the land of Canaan, and ſaid "unto them, Get you up this *way* ſouthward, and "go up into the mountain; and ſee the land, what "it *is*; and the people that dwelleth therein, whe-"ther they *be* ſtrong or weak, few or many; and "what the land *is*, that they dwell in, whether "it *be* good or bad; and what cities *they be* that "they dwell in, whether in tents or in ſtrong "holds; and what the land *is*, whether it *be* fat "or lean, whether there be wood therein or not: "and be ye of good courage and bring of the fruit "of the land."

Thus inſtructed they explored the country, and at the end of forty days, they returned, bearing between two upon a ſtaff, a branch with one cluſter of grapes which they had cut down at the brook of

Eſhcol. But when they "came to Moſes, and to "Aaron, and to all the congregation of Iſrael unto "the wilderneſs of Paran, to Kadeſh, they ſaid, "we came unto the land, and ſurely it flow[eth] "with milk and honey, and this," exhibiting the cluſter, "is the fruit of it. Nevertheleſs, the people "*be* ſtrong that dwell in the land, the cities *are* "walled *and* very great: and, moreover, we ſaw "the children of Anak there."—Caleb would have animated the tribes inſtantly to conflict and triumph. With all the ardor of a man who followed the Lord fully, he cried before Moſes and the people, "let us go up at once and poſſeſs it; for we "are well able to overcome it." But the men who went up with him maintained the reverſe and "brought an evil report of the land."

All the congregation, under the influence of ſinful credulity "lifted up their voice, and cried "and wept, and murmured." To Moſes and Aaron they ſaid, "would God we had died in "this wilderneſs." To one another, "let us make "a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

On hearing the unguarded wiſh, the ungrateful propoſal, Moſes and Aaron fell on their faces, Caleb and Joſhua rent their clothes; they expoſtulated with the people, but in vain, "the congre-"gation bade ſtone them with ſtones."—Perhaps the infatuated throng were preparing for the purpoſe, but——"the glory of the Lord appeared in "the tabernacle before all the Children of Iſrael." Jehovah from the glory, threatens immediate and utter deſtruction, Moſes pours out his heart in prayer —the voice of his ſupplication is heard.—The Lord ſaid unto him, "I have pardoned according to thy "word: but, as I live the earth ſhall be filled with "the glory of the Lord—all thoſe men which have "ſeen my glory, and have not hearkened to my "voice: ſurely *they* ſhall not ſee the land."

The Iſraelites had cried, " would God we had " died in the wilderneſs :" the God they had cenſured, to diſplay their crime in their puniſhment, returned " as truly as I live, as ye have ſpoken in " mine ears, ſo will I do to you. Your carcaſes " ſhall fall in this wilderneſs; and all that were num- " bered of you, from twenty years old and upward, " which have murmured againſt me, doubtleſs ye " ſhall not come into the land—ſave Caleb the ſon " of Jephunneh, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun."

The men that brought " a ſlander upon the " land, died by the plague."—Contrary to the word of God, which directed their return into the wilderneſs by the way of the Red Sea, multitudes of the people preſumed to go up unto the hill top, to enter on the poſſeſſion of the land, but the Amalekites which dwelt on the hill, and the Canaanites came down and Iſrael was diſcomfited.

At theſe memorable periods, " The voice of the " the Lord ſhook the wilderneſs of Kadeſh."—While thus, the men were awfully deſtroyed by the plague—while the armies of Iſrael were routed, and many of them ſlain by the inhabitants of the mountain, while the ſolemn decree reſted on the guilty tribes, it is probable that Moſes lifting his hands towards yonder holy temple, expreſſed the pious emotions of his heart in the words of this Pſalm—" Lord thou haſt been our dwelling place " in all generations."

" Before the mountains were brought forth, or " ever thou hadſt formed the earth and the world, " even from everlaſting to everlaſting thou *art* God."

" Thou turneſt man to deſtruction and ſayeſt, Re- " turn ye children of men !"

" For a thouſand years in thy ſight *are but* as " yeſterday, when it is paſt, and *as* a watch in the " night."

" Thou carrieſt them away as with a flood, they
" are as a ſleep, in the morning *they are* like graſs
" *which* groweth up."

" In the morning it flouriſheth and groweth up;
" in the evening it is cut down and withereth."

Among the Pſalms in general, this Pſalm as a monitor of mortality, is like the yew or the willow among the trees of the wood.—Mortality afflicts the ſoul; for the afflicted, prayer is the moſt ſuitable exerciſe; in prayer we draw near to God, and nearneſs to God fills the mind with great and holy ſentiments.—In this addreſs, the Prophet regards Jehovah as Iſrael's perpetual habitation, and contraſts the eternity and ſelf exiſtence of God with the frail and dependant ſtate of man. To man, a thouſand years ſeem a prodigious period; to God, they are as yeſterday, when it is paſt, and as a watch in the night. " As a rock in the rolling waves of the
" ſea, or a tower in a torrent of gliding water; or
" as the gnomon of a ſun dial, which has all the
" hours of the day ſurrounding it, and the ſun, by
" it caſts a ſhade, and diſtinguiſhes them, but the
" ſtyle remains unmoved and unaffected; ſo God is
" the ſame and his years change not:"—with him one day is as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day; but, as for man his days are vanity.

As this Pſalm was compoſed at a period in the progreſs of ſociety, when language was very imperfect, it abounds with that ſimplicity and boldneſs of alluſion, which diſtinguiſhed earlier and ruder ages.—In the recital of a ſtory, ſometimes a greater at others a leſs period of time is for the purpoſe employed.—In one narration, there may be little to intereſt the attention, in another, a ſucceſſion of the moſt affecting paſſages; but, all narrations have their beginning and their cloſe, all pertinently reſemble the earthly exiſtence of man, for, ver. 9th, we " ſpend our years as a tale that is told."

Several beautiful repreſentations of the triumphs of mortality are given in our text.—They exhibit,

—The progreſſion of man from infancy to advanced age—like graſs, in the morning he flouriſheth and groweth up.

—The real ſtate of men during this progreſſion: they are as a ſleep.

—The iſſue of their preſent exiſtence: in the evening the graſs is cut down and withereth.

—The ſudden manner in which this event is ſometimes effected: thou carrieſt them away as with a flood.

To prove the analogy between animal and vegetable life is a taſk we tranſmit to fancy and the philoſopher, but, in its gradual advance, and in its apparent vigor, graſs is a ſignificant emblem of man. —From the ſeaſon when the gentle ſouth wind, firſt ſucceeds the howling ſtorms of winter; till the ſun ſheds on our climes its ſtrongeſt ray, the graſs continues riſing, and preparing for the days of harveſt. Man, from the moment he firſt breathes the air of heaven, until he arrives at maturity, increaſes like the flower of the field.—The graſs ſtem is not ſeen on the boſom of the earth at firſt in full ſtrength, neither hath it been the pleaſure of providence to introduce us into the world in a ſtate of manhood—inſenſibly as the riſing of the tender herb we paſs through the various ſtages of infancy, childhood, and youth, until we attain to riper years.

The circumſtances of our firſt parents were extremely different from ours.—They were probably created in a ſtate of maturity.—Their bodies were not like the graſs which to-day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven.—Like the tree of life which ſtood in the midſt of the paradiſe of God, fair, vigorous, and immortal, they flouriſhed. But alas! Sin has procured their ejection from Eden, and the placing of the ſword and the cherubim to prevent their re-entrance. The garden of the Lord has been exchanged, for

a wilderneſs of thorns and thiſtles. Years produced ſymptoms of mortality, and Adam and Eve withered as the leaf. But now, not from the duſt of the ground is man, not from the ſide of man, is woman inſtantly formed. Were we to enter on this earthly exiſtence in a ſtate of manhood, it is probable aſtoniſhment, perplexity, and diſtreſs, would be our firſt aſſociates. But, divine wiſdom hath ordained the contrary. Man that is born of a woman cometh forth like a flower. From earlieſt infancy, we gradually increaſe in mental and corporeal ſtrength; before ſuch a degree of intellect is attained, as ſhall incite enquiries into the nature and cauſes of ſurrounding objects, by the habit of obſerving them, and by the converſations of our friends, their properties in part become familiar. Soon as the early efforts of reflection appear, our parents or preceptors enter on the delightful taſk, to "rear the tender thought, and teach the young idea how to "ſhoot." Juvenile recreations nerve the limbs, and unite with fancy and incident in forming little circles of friendſhip. The page of ſcience is opened before us, we read and become familiar with ages paſt. Theſe we are taught are patterns of the preſent and the future, ſince "that which hath been "is now, and that which is to be hath been already." As years increaſe, that we may be prepared for activity and uſefulneſs in ſociety, our attention is directed to mechanical, literary, or mercantile employments, and while in theſe we are laboring to improve, the wheels of time by an imperceptible movement lift us into manhood.

As like the graſs man groweth up, like the graſs he flouriſheth: beauty, uſefulneſs, and probable duration, occaſionally diſtinguiſh his exiſtence.—In righteouſneſs and true holineſs the fair image of his God, was he created, and even among the ruins of the fall we may collect a full conviction of his ancient glory: his very form beſpeaks his ſuperiority

over the animals around him, and his countenance, when on it piety and benevolence, humility and fortitude are delineated, is beautiful, beyond expreſſion.

Divine wiſdom and goodneſs ſhine through the whole creation. While the verdant landſcape entertains the eye, the mind reflects with delight, that beauty and uſefulneſs are united. The God of mercy "cauſeth the graſs to grow for the cattle, "and herb, for the ſervice of man, that he may "bring forth food out of the earth." Man too is eſſentially uſeful to inferior animals; without him, to exerciſe their qualities and concentrate their ſervices, they become inſignificant. Divine providence has directed him to appropriate their capacity to the original deſign of their creation. It is his to relieve the ſheep of the weight and impurities of her fleece, the kine of their redundancy of milk, and for them to treaſure up and diſtribute ſuitable food.

With regard to our fellow human beings, "no "man liveth unto himſelf, no man dieth unto him-"ſelf." Through all the ſocial relations of life, man is deſigned to be the aſſiſtant of man. While ſuffered like the graſs to flouriſh, we are bound to relieve the needy, to teach the ignorant, to comfort the mourner; our influence, exertions, and example, ſhould embrace the general welfare of ſociety, that we may be perfect as he is perfect, who cauſeth his rains to deſcend, and his ſun to ſhine on the evil and on the good, on the juſt and on the unjuſt.

Had we never obſerved the effect produced on vegetation by the Autumnal ſun, and the ſcythe of the mower, we might have been tempted to have concluded that he who had "ſo clothed the graſs "of the field," had deſigned it ſhould wear its gay veſtment for ever. Equally improbable might it have ſeemed to us, that ſuch who flouriſhed in the vigor of youth, among the ſcenes of friendſhip and reputation, ſhould fall ſuddenly into the arms of

death. But alas! the hiſtories of the world, our own obſervation, and our preſent afflicting feelings teſtify, that man in his beſt eſtate, is altogether lighter than vanity. It is confeſſed, man is immortal, and the conviction of his immortality, while it occaſions forgetfulneſs of death, prompts him to extend his views into futurity. But, ſtill theſe views are bounded by the term of the preſent life. With reſpect to futurity, ſuch is—The real ſtate of men while progreſſing from the cradle to the coffin, that the Prophet tells us in the text—" they are as a ſleep."

Frequently, in the Scriptures, in a moral ſenſe, men are declared in a ſtate of ſleep. The inactivity of the righteous, and the inſenſibility of the wicked, juſtify the application of this declaration to their oppoſite characters. " While the bridegroom tar-" ried, they all ſlumbered and ſlept." In this paſſage, the ſons of men are not ſaid to be actually in a ſtate of moral ſleep, but a contraſt is here drawn between ſleep and the mortal ſtate of man.

Sleep is a ſtate foreign to meditation, and friendly to deluſion. With the body, the active, energetic capacities of the mind, ſink into repoſe; while the " mimic fancy" diſturbs, or entertains the moments of ſleep with changing dreams. In this view, the Iſraelites in the deſart, were as a ſleep. Reflection would have taught them that it were guilt for Iſrael to fear. Defended by that God, who hath ſpread the heavens as a curtain, by whom rocks are thrown down, and iſles taken up, as a very little thing; it would have been natural for the tribes to have ſubjoined to the invitations of Joſhua and Caleb: " God is our refuge and ſtrength: we " will not fear, though the earth be removed, and " though the mountains be carried into the depth " of the ſea: God ſhall help us, and that right early." " But, inſtead of this, the ſpies feign themſelves juſt men, and the people believe their words. Infidelity

is the parent of fear, and fear ever magnifies its object and clothes it with terror. Hear, how cowardice led these men to describe Canaan's inhabitants. "The people we saw in it are men of a "great stature. There we saw the giants, the sons of "Anak, *which come* of the giants, and we were in "our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in "their sight." Base amplification! profound insensibility! They were as a sleep.—Apply this thought my hearers, to yourselves. What does your existence testify? Are your minds habituated to serious meditation, or, are they amused, ensnared, debased with sinful delusions.

The character of God, your maker, is to be traced in the system of the universe, and in the holy Scriptures. Do you consider the heavens the work of his fingers, the moon and the stars which he hath ordained? Of him, with David, is your meditation sweet, when you behold the fowls of the air, and the lilies of the field? When you survey the earth, and approach the mountains, Is that God adored, who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth, who toucheth the mountains, and they smoke. Are the oracles of truth, to you a treasure to be desired? Is the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, more dear to you than the light of the day? Are ye sensible, that but for this revelation, you had been gathering your gods from the stores of the stream, carving them from the trees of the forest, selecting them from the beasts of the field, or worshipping the sun as the Father of lights? Without this sacred volume, had your superstition equalled your ignorance, like the Athenians, ye had sacrificed to AN UNKNOWN GOD.

The necessity of the existence of human governments, and your voluntary subjection to their authority, must prove to you the existence of the moral government of God, and the propriety of your subjection to the father of spirits. Does the idea

of your reſponſibility, induce you to ſtand in awe and ſin not? Are ye by this led to ſet the Lord always before you, that he may be beloved, obeyed, imitated, and adored? or are you as a ſleep?

Sin, the tranſgreſſion of the laws of this righteous governor, is the greateſt evil in the univerſe. Have ye reflected on its malignant nature, and on the deceitfulneſs of its approaches? Are ye ſenſible that its nature is ſufficiently debaſing, to ſink the creation into decay, man into wretchedneſs, and angels into dæmons? When tranſgreſſors are bold, are you grieved becauſe they keep not the word of the Lord? Has God the Spirit made you ſenſible of the deſperate wickedneſs of your hearts? Have you left your garments—fled, and eſcaped, when the hand of guilty pleaſure has been extended to draw you into ruin? Brethren, examine yourſelves! Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin.

Fellow ſinner! Is ſerious meditation alive on the ineſtimable worth of that vital ſpark of heavenly flame within thee? Do thy ſentiments accord with his, who ſays, that it profiteth a man nothing, if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Art thou aware of the contentions of both worlds, for thy ſoul? that heaven employs its attractions to draw thee upward, while hell engages its power and artifice for thy deſtruction? The capacities of the ſoul for happineſs or miſery, are great. Its powers we know not how to circumſcribe. Affix boundaries to its excurſions, and it will paſs them, like the flying ſtorm over the ſummit of a mountain.

> "The ſoul of man was made to walk the ſkies,
> "Delightful outlet of its priſon here!"

Senſible of this, art thou ſeeking firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs? Is thy prayer, to the God of thy life, "Say unto my ſoul, thou "art my ſalvation.—Bring my ſoul out of priſon, "that I may praiſe thy name!"—Jeſus, who was dead, is alive again, and, behold, he liveth for-

evermore! Into his hand, haſt thou committed thine immortal intereſts? Is he, of God, made unto thee wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption?

The truth of his goſpel is well atteſted. Its foundation ſtandeth ſure. The grandeur of its truths, the divinity of its tendency, the oppoſitions of the impious, the reſurrection of Chriſt, miracles performed, and prophecies fulfilled, riſe like awful and immoveable columns ſupporting the immortal fabric. Have ye brethren walked about Zion, marked well her bulwarks, and conſidered her palaces? Are ye ready to give to an infidel world, a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear? Do you confirm the excellency of the grace of God to *others*, by living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this evil world? Is the teſtimony of Chriſt confirmed in *you*, by the conſolation it adminiſters when your heart and fleſh faileth. Our Lord, as though fond of this mean abode, before he became fleſh, occaſionally viſited our earth; before you join the ſpirits of the juſt, are you by devout meditation and earneſt prayer, paying your viſits to yonder, better country?

Thus to be engaged is, I truſt, the happineſs of ſome of you, but even charity herſelf, forbids my ſuppoſing this of you all. "The Lord looked "down from heaven, upon the children of men, to "ſee if there were any that did underſtand and "ſeek God;" but, alas! he directs his Prophet to declare that "*they are as a ſleep.*" Their own mercies are forſaken, and lying vanities are purſued. Reflection and converſation on the character of God, on the worth of a ſoul, on the glories of the Redeemer, on the ſolemnities of futurity, are ſhunned as dull and irkſome. The fluctuations of faſhion, unholy amuſements, and political viciſſitudes, have charms ſufficient to ſecure the popular attention. How few provide themſelves bags that wax not old;

how many labor for ample poſſeſſions, where moth and ruſt corrupt. Their inward thought is that their houſes ſhall continue for ever, they boaſt themſelves in the multitude of their riches, they call their lands by their own names. This their way is their folly, for like ſheep they are laid in the grave, yet, their poſterity approve their ſayings. In oppoſing chriſtianity, the groſſeſt ſophiſtry is termed ſound reaſoning, and an impious laugh at the Bible, a refutation of its truth. The progreſs of philoſophic wiſdom, and with it, the progreſs of rational religion is boaſted; but, how few reflect that the world, *by wiſdom*, knew not God. Broad is the road that leadeth to deſtruction.

Sleep is an unprepared ſtate. When under its influence, a Sampſon may be bound, a Saul deprived of his ſpear and his cruiſe, and in the field tares may be ſown. Amid the darkneſs of this evil world, real chriſtians are watchmen, they ſtand by grace prepared for whatever may approach; but the ungodly "are as a ſleep." They are unprepared for the changes of life, and eſpecially for ſudden death, and the throne of judgment. Repoſing in the lap of carnal delight, the ſinner is ſhorn of his ſtrength, and made a fettered captive, ſold under ſin: he is deſtitute of every weapon of defence, and his heart, like the vineyard of the ſluggard, is all grown over with tares and thorns, and the ſtone wall thereof broken down.

Sleep too is a ſtate tranſient and ſoon forgotten. The Hebrews had to ſleep a ſhort time in the wilderneſs, and then to wake up in eternity.

In ſome copies of the Scriptures there is a little alteration in the pointing of this paſſage, which affords a ſtill more ſtriking idea. "They are as a ſleep, in the morning." Man's life is like one of thoſe morning ſlumbers, which the doors in the ſtreets, or "the voice of a bird" can deſtroy. In the connection of the text, Moſes declares the brevity

of life, " The days of our years are three-ſcore " years and ten; and if by reaſon of ſtrength they " be four-ſcore years, yet is their ſtrength, labor, " and ſorrow; for it is ſoon cut off, and we flee " away.—Boaſt not thyſelf of to-morrow, thou " knoweſt not what a day may bring forth. For, " what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth " for a LITTLE TIME, and then vaniſheth away.

As ſleep is tranſient, ſo it leaves little impreſſion on the memory. Whether from the habit of repoſe, or becauſe at ſuch ſeaſons the mental powers are in a meaſure inactive; there are few occurrences we more eaſily forget than ſleep. To human pride, the thought is very humiliating, that after a few years there ſhall be left, ſcarce a veſtige of the exiſtence of thouſands. In the records of crimes and ſlaughter, and what, but a detail of theſe is univerſal hiſtory; the hand of the hiſtorian, out of the millions that have conquered, or have fallen, has ſcarcely held back from oblivion, the names of their leaders: the reſt are forgotten as a ſleep.

This idea is illuſtrated in the Scriptures under a variety of inſtructive emblems.

The clouds which move above our heads, and which ſo agreeably vary the mariners proſpect, frequently diſappear in their journey, and always fly away without leaving a trace in the heavens of their having exiſted there. " As the cloud is con- " ſumed and vaniſheth away, ſo he that goeth down " to the grave, ſhall return no more to his houſe, " neither ſhall his place know him any more."

The ſhadow paſſes over the face of the earth, but who, from any impreſs can point its courſe.—Of man it is ſaid, he fleeth as a ſhadow, and continueth not.—My days, ſays David, are like a ſhadow that declineth, and I am withered like graſs.—As clouds, as ſhadows we are now fulfilling our courſe, and ſhall ſhortly enter " the land of forgetfulneſs." —They are as a ſleep.

As ſleep is to be regarded as an image of life, ſo, alſo, as a repreſentation of death, and death is—the iſſue of the preſent exiſtence of man.—In the evening the graſs is cut down and withereth. Of old to the Prophet, the voice ſaid, cry! and he ſaid, what ſhall I cry? All fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field. The graſs withereth, the flower fadeth, becauſe the ſpirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: ſurely the people is graſs!

Pictures are frequently the children of fancy—ſometimes they exhibit ſerious truth. Death drawn on the canvas, with the ſignificant ſcythe in his hand, aptly reminds us, that as for man his days are as graſs. Beneath the ſtroke of death man fails and withers, as the graſs beneath the ſcythe of the mower. The temporary death of vegetation may be conſidered as a conſequence of that appointment, which ſecures the ſucceſſion of the ſeaſons. When Noah preſented his burnt offerings on the altar he had built, the Lord ſaid in his heart, "While "the earth remaineth, ſeed time and harveſt, and "cold, and heat, and ſummer and winter, and day "and night ſhall not ceaſe." And, is there not an appointed time for man upon earth? Are not his days as the days of an hireling?

It is probable that in Eden, there was but little variation of ſeaſons. We know that the tree of life bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded its fruit every month. We know that the earthly paradiſe was a figure of yonder heavenly ſtate, and that

> *There*, everlaſting Spring abides,
> And never with'ring flowers:

It may be proper, therefore, to regard the decaying of the herbs in the Autumnal ſeaſon as the fruit of ſin. In this view, man withers like the graſs. Sin hath entered into the world, and death by ſin,

and ſo death hath paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned. The wages of ſin is death.

There is a likeneſs between graſs and man, in that there is in each the principle of decay. Philoſophers tell, that the powers which at firſt form and maintain vegetable life, have at length a tendency to produce its death, and that the growing up of the graſs is only a part of its progreſs to a ſtate of decay. It is thus with man, the body is as good as dead, becauſe of ſin. By a natural and conſtant progreſſion, it haſtens to diſſolution. "What is the effect of food, drink, and ſimilar "ſupports of life? They produce ſtrength. What "is their effect afterwards? always leſs and leſs. "What is it towards the end of life? They are ſo "far from giving any more ſtrength, that they "evidently prove weakening. Nay, the very ſame "powers by which life was at firſt ſupported, at laſt "put an end to it, commonly through the inter-"vention of diſeaſe."

This corruptible muſt be ſown in weakneſs. Death is the common proprietor of all. There is no man hath power over the ſpirit, to retain the ſpirit, neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no diſcharge in that war. If amiable character, if general eſteem, if the affection of relatives could have prevented, our three friends, would not lie mouldering in yonder ground. But we muſt needs die and be as water ſpilled upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. One event happeneth to the righteous and to the wicked. All the heroes of ancient days are become inſenſible to the voice of fame. On the tongue of Cicero everlaſting ſilence is impoſed, and Cæſar has dropt for ever his papers and his ſword. The grave has already glutted itſelf with the carnage of millions: hundreds of our fellow creatures are daily falling, and ſtill it vociferates give! give! The inſtruments of death are every where prepared to execute the divine pleaſure.

The very mercies of our exiſtence, may prove the miniſters of our diſſolution. To our vitals, the food we eat, or the fluid we drink, may convey ſecret poiſon. The elements of nature, which are ſo favorable to our happineſs, if God permit, are capable of effecting our deſtruction.

The *earth*, whoſe ſurface delights the eye with its variety of proſpect, and the taſte with its luſcious fruits, may open its mouth, and inſtantly ſwallow us up. Not to mention the judgment that fell on Korah and his company, hiſtory records ſeveral providences of this ſolemn nature.

The *air* we breathe, whoſe influence is ſo requiſite for our life, health, and comfort, may be charged with peſtilential vapor, and bear on its wings, fevers, corruption, death. Let the two great cities on either ſide of us, let Philadelphia, let New York bear teſtimony to this truth.

The *fire*, whoſe heat tempers the chilling blaſts of winter, by which we prepare our daily ſuſtenance, and around which we ſit and enjoy reciprocal effuſions of friendſhip, may kindle into flame ſurrounding objects, and conſume us in our habitation. * Thyſelf, thy wife, thy children, Andrew Brown, riſe in our bleeding memory.

The *waters* of the river, by which the banks are made fertile, and the country, on every ſide enriched and beautified, may prove—have proved the flood-gate of death. Thou carrieſt them away as with a flood. The phraſe teaches—the ſudden manner in which this event is ſometimes effected.

The wilderneſs in which the Iſraelites were, was very mountainous, and the climate favorable to occaſional prodigious torrents of rain. Theſe torrents tumbling down from the hills, made the rivers and the valleys overflow, and ſwept along with them

* See a very ſuitable and intereſting diſcourſe, delivered on the melancholy occaſion of their death, and publiſhed by the Reverend Samuel Magaw, D. D. Philadelphia.

the corn, the trees, the tents of ſhepherds, and whatever might impede their courſe. As it is probable this Pſalm was written ſoon after the "time of the "firſt ripe grapes," and as in the ſummer ſeaſon inundations moſt prevail, indulging the ſuppoſition that one of theſe floods was actually then, or lately had been, rolling before the face of Moſes and the people, the compariſon muſt have been very pertinent and affecting.—The ſpies who died of the plague were carried away as with a flood.

The Prophet Iſaiah, compares the periodical overflowings of water, to the introgreſſion of an enemy, and intimates that only the bulwarks of heaven can ſtay the tumultuous current. "When the enemy "ſhall come in like a flood, the ſpirit of the Lord "ſhall lift up a ſtandard againſt him." It is poſſible too, the words may allude to the time, when all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, when the waters prevailed, the mountains were covered, and the ark went upon the face of the waters. Then the world of the ungodly was carried away with a flood.

Though death be the certain deſtroyer of mortals, there is a great difference as to the manner of his approach. Sometimes he comes lingeringly, and to the ſick man weariſome nights are appointed; ſometimes, his viſitation is ſudden as lightning from a cloud. Death conſtantly reſembles the reſurrection, in that its period is unknown; occaſionally, it is like it, in that it is produced in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The whole race of men are like the graſs of the field, ſome of them are like graſs on the houſe tops, with which the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth ſheaves, his boſom.

It is ſcarcely neceſſary that I enter particularly into the circumſtances of the ſolemn event, which now ſo very ſenſibly touches our tendereſt feelings. You

all know that * Mrs. Mary Wythe and her husband, together with Miss Martha Reeves, and Mr. John Forder, formed a social party, and, the day being very calm and inviting, in a small boat crossed the Delaware. After spending a few hours on the opposite shore in innocent recreation, evening came on, and they returned. While on the water their fears were awakened by the leaking of the boat; but they hoped in safety to reach the shore. Delusive hope! When but about ten or twelve yards from the bank, the small boat struck against a large, which the increasing darkness had concealed from their view. It shook, it overturned—they sunk.!

God of mercy! what a scene is here! Forgive the excess of our sorrows: amid the darkness of thy providences, we believe thee the God of mercy still.

A husband in the water labouring in vain to bring to the shore his sinking wife. A mother on the margin of the river, hearing and joining the shrieks of her beloved, her dying daughter, herself with difficulty restrained from plunging into the waves. Persons standing by the water, by fear, incapacity, or consternation, strangely restrained from yielding assistance. Assistance indeed, short, came, but, came too late. The returning tide swept

* Mrs. Wythe was a young person lately from England, who, the preceding six months, had been a peaceful and esteemed resident in Bordentown.

Mr. Wythe, whom divine providence hath astonishingly preserved to witness and mourn the afflicting catastrophe, is an English Tutor in Bordentown Academy.

Miss Martha Reeves, a very mild and amiable person, was the joy of her parents, and the pride of her acquaintance. She seemed lately to have become the subject of pious impressions.

Mr. John Forder, was a young man, whose general conduct secured him public esteem. He promised to have been an ornament to society in the capacity of an engraver.

Mrs. Reeves, the mother of the young lady, led to the water's side by anxiety for the safety of her child, was a distracted spectator of this calamity.

them into eternity. They were carried *away*, as with a flood—*away* from conjugal and paternal embraces, *away* from the circles of friendſhip, *away* from the flattering proſpects of life, *away* from the means of grace, for ever away.

Little did they apprehend the ſhadows of the evening were darkening into the ſhadows of death. In the morning of the day, they were like the graſs which groweth up and flouriſheth, in the evening they were cut down, and now lie withering.

From ſuch a providence, unleſs our hearts are inſenſible in the extreme, we muſt certainly collect ſome uſeful ſentiment.

An idea is in the text ſuggeſted, which may ſerve to produce devout ſubmiſſion, and calm reſignation. THOU carrieſt them away! The flood is awful; but the Lord ſitteth on the flood, and commands our worſhip, and our affection, as he rides along. Hear him ſaying, as in majeſty he moves, "Be ſtill, and "know that I am God." Parents! Huſband! friends, be ſtill. God has a ſovereign right over all our comforts. When holy Job was deprived of his children, by a ſudden providence, he deeply felt the ſtroke. "My ſighing," ſaith he, "cometh before "I eat;" a ſeaſon very likely to inſtigate in him the emotions of grief. It was when his ſons and daughters were eating and drinking in their eldeſt brother's houſe, that the great wind came from the wilderneſs, and deſtroyed both the building and the gueſts. But yet, his pious acquieſcence with the meaſures of heaven, more than equalled his ſorrow. His ſtroke was heavier than his groaning. The good man aroſe, he rent his mantle, and ſhaved his head, and fell upon the ground and worſhipped. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and "naked ſhall I return thither. The Lord gave and "the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name "of the Lord."

Poor indeed, ye mourning relatives! would be your conſolations, were ye left to reſolve the ſolemn event only into accident. Ye know, not a ſparrow, not a hair can fall, without the permiſſion of our heavenly Father: much leſs a dear and amiable relation. However dark to human comprehenſion, the ways of the Lord are right. His throne is eſtabliſhed in juſtice, and the heavens ſhall declare his righteouſneſs: what thou knoweſt not now, thou ſhalt know hereafter. To you, indeed, the providence pointedly addreſſes itſelf.

Some of you know the Lord; let this cheriſh your graces. You perceive that at ſuch an hour as ye think not, the ſon of man cometh, hear then your Saviour's admonition; "What I ſay unto "you, I ſay unto all, *watch*." You ſee that earthly friendſhips, are like land floods in ſummer, "as the "ſtream of brooks, they paſs away." Aſſert then, and exult in your kindred with the ſkies. Prove that your converſation is in heaven, and from thence be looking for the coming of your Lord. Riſe, trim your lamps, gird up your loins, for behold the bridegroom cometh: conſcious of the vanity of the creature, make God your everlaſting all, and while in theſe waters of affliction, your ſpirits faint, may the joy of the Lord be your ſtrength.

Some of you I fear, know him not. O that from this day, heavenly wiſdom may be yours. Faſt fall the tears from your eyes: your grief is amiable: inſenſibility belongs to the ſtones of the mountain; but amid the tumult of your affliction,

Hark! from the tombs a doleful ſound!

A voice is heard from the chambers of the grave, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy ſoul liveth, there "is but a ſtep between thee and death." Before you depart hence, be it your firſt concern, to fly for refuge to that Saviour who hath deſtroyed death, and him that hath the power of death, that is the devil:—the rains will deſcend, the floods will come,

the winds will blow; but here ſtands the rock of ages, and whoſo buildeth on it, ſhall not be aſhamed or confounded, world without end. There is ſomething very awful in death, and more ſo, in ſudden death. Were you now ſtanding under the projection of ſome tall rock—did you perceive the earth trembling, and your being daſhed to pieces by the falling precipice, inevitable, who could deſcribe the horrors of your boſom! Death through a mean ſo tremendous, ſhocks the ſoul. But, brethren, to thoſe who paſs into eternity ſtrangers, and yet enemies to our Lord, and his Chriſt, ſuch a death will be an object not of dread, but of deſire. When the heaven departs as a ſcroll, and every iſland and mountain is moved, when the great day of the wrath of the Lamb is come, ſinners ſhall ſay to the mountains and to the rocks, *fall on us*. The voice of the archangel, and the trump of God ſhall introduce the ſolemn period. Happy for us, the voice of the arch-angel as yet is tranſporting, "This day is born "a Saviour which is Chriſt the Lord. Glory to "God in the higheſt, and on earth peace."—The trump of God is as yet, ſounded in mercy. In your ears the Jubilee is blown: may the ſacred ſpirit convey this, its language, to your hearts, "Awake "thou that ſleepeſt and ariſe from the dead, and "Chriſt ſhall give thee light."

Since life is but graſs, and as a ſleep in its beſt eſtate, and ſince it is ſometimes carried away as with a flood, how ought we to ſtand in readineſs for the ſerious cloſe. Sudden deaths are ſometimes contemplated in ſo wrong a point of view, that inſtead of awakening men to righteouſneſs, they are uſed as incitements to ſelf-elation. When we obſerve the deſcent of ſuppoſed judgments on others, and ourſelves freed [illegible] the evil, we are ready each to exclaim, "Th[illegible]od I am not as other men are."

It is acknowledged, that the hand of vengeance ſunk Pharaoh and his hoſt in the Red Sea, and

that the ſame hand ſtruck dead Ananias and Sapphira, and ſmote Herod on his throne with worms. But the deſtruction of the Egyptian monarch, was deſigned to produce reverence for the divine majeſty. Even in the rapturous ſong of the people on this ſignal occaſion, when one might have expected that the vindictive arm, would have been forgotten in the midſt of ſuch glorious triumph; Moſes introduces in the ſong, "Who is like unto "thee glorious in holineſs, *fearful* in praiſes." When Ananias and Sapphira died, great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard theſe things. And the death of Herod, far from being an occaſion for the indulgence of ſelf-eſteem, ſpeaks terribly its guilt.

In the formation of our judgment, our ſenſes are prone injuriouſly to intrude. In every age, wealth and honour have been miſtakenly regarded as teſtimonies of divine approbation, and of conſequence, afflictions have been conſidered as proofs of the guilt of the ſubject and of the indignation of heaven. The The afflictions of Job were traced by his friends into the hypocriſy of his heart; and his wife, with aſtoniſhment bordering on indignation, ſaid to him, "Doſt thou ſtill retain thine integrity?" Is it poſſible that thou canſt be ſo inſenſible to the iniquity of thy heart, and to the juſtice of heaven, as to pretend to uprightneſs of character, and that thy record is on high, while the rod of the Almighty is upon thee? Curſe God and die!—How mild! How convincing the patriarch's anſwer!—"What? . . . . "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and "ſhall we not receive evil?—In all this Job ſinned "not."

Were the idea to obtain in ſociety, that every calamity is a mark of Jehovah's diſpleaſure, the human heart would become inattentive to the voice of woe. The tears of the widow, and the cries of

the orphan, would intereſt no longer, and the fair forms of benevolence and ſenſibility would harden into ſtatues of braſs.

The great prophet of Iſrael, ſenſible of this, hath taught the exceeding error of ſuch an opinion. Holy, harmleſs, and undefiled, when ſtanding in the midſt of the people, he ſaid, "Which of you convinceth me of ſin?" and hereby condemned ſuch who did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted.

On one occaſion there were ſome who told him of the Galileans whoſe blood Pilot had mingled with the ſacrifices; but Jeſus ſaid unto them, "Suppoſe "ye that theſe Galileans were ſinners above all the "Galileans becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell "you nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe "periſh. Or thoſe eighteen upon whom the tower "of Siloam fell and ſlew them, think ye that they "were ſinners above all men that dwelt at Jeruſalem? "I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall all "likewiſe periſh." When the Barbarians at Melita ſaw the viper faſten on the hand of Paul, they ſaid among themſelves, no doubt this man is a murderer; but when he ſhook off the venemous beaſt, and they, after looking a great while, ſaw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and ſaid, he is a God. So fluctuating and miſtaken is popular opinion.

While therefore in our reflections we wander among the tombs of ſuch whom ſudden death hath removed, may we ſo meditate on the brevity of life, as to redeem the time, and ſo on the uncertainty of the coming of death as to ſtand always prepared.

Amid theſe ſcenes of death and darkneſs, how grateful ought we to be that life and light break in upon us. All fleſh is graſs and all the glory of man as the flower of the field, but the word of our God abideth for ever, and this is the word which by the

Goſpel is preached to you. In the midſt of the heaps of ſlain, the Saviour ſtands and declares, "I "am the reſurrection and the life, he that believeth "in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live, and "whoſo liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die; "believeſt thou this?" Our Lord himſelf became ſubject to death, that through death the mourner might loſe his ſting, and the chriſtian obtain his triumph. The bleſſed Goſpel reconciles us to the ſorrows of the preſent ſtate, by teaching us that theſe light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. It calms the ſoul in proſpect of the valley of the ſhadow of death, "for we know, that, if "our earthly houſe of *this* tabernacle be diſſolved, we "have a building of God, a houſe, not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." The goſpel leads forward our joyful hopes to the period, when this corruptible muſt put on incorruption, this mortal, immortality, and when ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, death is ſwallowed up in victory.

Our text is by ſome referred to this glorious period. In the morning it flouriſheth and groweth up; in the morning of the laſt day, the righteous ſhall appear verdant and vigorous as the herb that renews itſelf.

The reſurrection is compared to the reviviſication of vegetables. "Thy dead men ſhall live, together "with my dead body ſhall they ariſe; awake and "ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt, for thy dew is the "dew of herbs, and the earth ſhall caſt out her dead." Paul ſeems to regard the interment of a juſt man, only as the caſting of a ſeed corn into the earth; and as the ſun quickens vegetation after the blaſts of winter have deſolated the landſcape, ſo after the deſolations of death, Chriſt, the quickening ſpirit, ſhall raiſe in power, what is ſown in weakneſs, and in glory, what is ſown in diſhonor.

For this confidence in a future reſurrection, we are indebted to the goſpel. Go viſit heathen nations, ſeek their cemeteries, aſk at the entrance of their charnel houſes, "Can theſe bones live?" They will anſwer, we cannot tell! But bear the enquiry to the Oracles of God, and learn, that they that are in their graves ſhall come forth; they that have done good to the reſurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the reſurrection of damnation.

There is one claſs of my preſent hearers, whom were I to paſs without a particular addreſs, I ſhould do equal injuſtice to my own feelings and to theirs. It affords me pleaſure to ſee ſo many young perſons whoſe countenances expreſs the ſincerity of their diſtreſs, and whoſe attention inſpires a cheerful hope, that they are ſolicitous for improving the ſtroke which has diminiſhed their friendſhips. In this diſpenſation you, my young friends, are immediately intereſted. The flood has not carried away the hoary head and the limbs trembling beneath the weight of age; it has not overwhelmed the child whoſe tender years prevented from reſiſting its influence, but it has prevailed over altogether ſuch as ye are. Neither of the deceaſed had attained to the age of twenty: they were in the enjoyment of perfect health, and were looking forward to future life, with that lively anticipation of good, which is ſo natural to the breaſt of youth. You are ſenſible they bid as fair for length of days as you, but now the grave is their habitation.

With the late Miſs Martha Reeves, as a native of this town you were beſt acquainted. One circumſtance attending her death, I know will affect you. She was expecting ſoon to change her condition in life, and to enter on the moſt tender and honorable of earthly relations. She had procured and was preparing her wedding clothes, but the garment in which the conſummation of the conjugal union was

expected, is now her winding ſheet. Lord what is Man! For bliſs,

> He builds too low who builds beneath the ſkies.
> Not e'en Narciſſa had beſpoke her ſhroud
> Nor had ſhe cauſe; a warning was deny'd.

Heaven ſupport the mind of the youth, who deſerved, who ſolicited, and obtained her affections, and who now mourns the unexpected loſs.

Let this providence teach you wiſdom. Beware of what is called *pleaſure* on earth; why fly to embrace it, 'tis but a phantom. Dream not of ſafety, becauſe the ſhores of terreſtrial happineſs appear in view, ſtorms and ſhoals may prevent your landing; even when the anchor is caſt and deliverance ſung, you may be blown away into a ſea of afflictions, or—ſuddenly ſink!

Truſt not in youth, in health, in beauty, or in friendſhip, theſe are flowers, fair indeed, but fading. Set not your affections on things on earth, for what is this earth to you? On trees and rivers, on fields and poſſeſſions, on apparel and habitations, we muſt in a few days, cloſe our eyes for ever; our eyes themſelves dim as the ſhadows of night, and every member of theſe bodies be corrupted and reſolved into duſt. Remember then your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not and the years of which ye ſhall ſay, we have no pleaſure in them. While the ſun, or the light, or the moon, or the ſtars be not darkened; or ever the ſilver cord be looſed, or the golden bowl be broken, remove ſorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy fleſh, for childhood and youth are vanity. Preſent that petition to the God in whoſe hands your breath is, which Moſes hath inſerted in the xcth Pſalm, "O ſatisfy us early with thy goodneſs, "that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

Your deceaſed friend diſtinguiſhed herſelf by her obedience to her parents, and in ſo doing performed a duty peculiarly pleaſing to God. Children obey

your parents in all things in the Lord, for this is right. Under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, the diſobedient ſon was delivered to the elders of the city and ſtoned. The eye that mocketh at his father, and deſpiſeth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley ſhall pick it out, and the young eagles ſhall eat it. I wiſh not to be underſtood as cenſuring you for the neglect of this duty; but I am ſatisfied that the more you abound in reflection on parental worth and tenderneſs, on the commands of God, and on the brevity of time, the more will you habituate yourſelves to the fulfilment of ſo amiable a courſe of conduct. It is ſometimes ſaid that the natural tendency of affection is deſcending, and that therefore, the love of a parent to a child, is ſtronger than the love of a child to a parent; but this idea ſhould operate as an additional incentive to duty. The ſtronger the affections of your parents, the more ſenſibly will they be pained by your inattention, and delighted with your obedience.

Above all, remember the duties you owe to God, our univerſal parent. Of you let him not have to ſay, as of the Iſraelites, "Hear O heavens, and "give ear O earth, for the Lord hath ſpoken! I "have nouriſhed and brought up children, and they "have rebelled againſt me." Indeed, againſt him, you have rebelled; and, if you perſevere in your rebellion, from his throne of judgment he will ſay, "Take theſe mine enemies that would not, I ſhould "reign over them, and ſlay them before me." Now, riding before you in the chariot of ſalvation, he commands his ſervants to proclaim, "Let the wicked "forſake his way, and the unrighteous man, his "thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and "he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he "will abundantly pardon." You are not only invited, but earneſtly entreated, to accept a pardon. Jeſus approaches the temple of your hearts, he ſtands and knocks; by the preſent calamity, he calls

aloud to you, and ſays, if any man hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come and ſup with him on earth, and he ſhall ſup with me in heaven. May God the ſpirit break open the door, which guilty reluctance, to admit the Saviour, hath ſo long kept cloſed, may he enter triumphant into your hearts, as his reſt.

I am conſcious, my fellow youths, that every artifice hell and infidelity can adopt, will be uſed to fetter you down to guilt and ruin. May you ſhun the ſnare, or break the chain. The pleaſures of popular applauſe, and the pain of being ſingular, to the mind of youth, are equally great. But, raiſe the balances of the ſanctuary and determine, which ought in your hearts, to preponderate, human applauſe and averſion, or the averſion and applauſe of God. Balance the ſuperficial and partial reaſonings of infidelity, with the ſolid and univerſal evidence of chriſtianity: contraſt the tendency of the two ſyſtems, and dare to cleave to that on which honeſt truth, permanent ſafety, divine holineſs, and immortal honor are found.

You know you are every moment expoſed to affliction and death. I am confident the goſpel can make tribulation joyful. From its truth and excellence, I derive conſolation, in proſpect of being numbered with the clods of the valley, and of entering the inviſible world; and from this confidence and ſatisfaction, am induced to recommend the goſpel to you. By the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, may you be delivered from ſin, the bane of life, and the ſting of death; that whether death come ſudden as a flood, or lingering as the withering graſs, it may diſmiſs you from theſe ſcenes of vanity, and introduce you to the ſociety of angels, and the everlaſting viſion of God.

Errata.

Page 12, line 12, from the bottom, for *ſtores*, read *ſtones*.
—— 13, — 11, from the top, for *bold*, r. *beheld*.

Oration.

My Friends and Fellow Mortals!

I NEED ſcarcely invite your attention to the preſent awful diſpenſation of Providence; the fatal ſubjects of it now before you, juſt about to be conſigned to the cold priſon of the grave, awaken in you every tender and ſympathetic feeling. The heaving breaſt, the deep drawn ſigh, the ſtarting tear, ſufficiently indicate that you are not unconcerned ſpectators of ſo melancholy an event. Let us improve upon the ſubject, and draw an uſeful leſſon from the ſad circumſtance. May you, my friends, receive an indelible impreſſion upon your minds, while thus ſoftened like the yielding wax under the ſeal. Behold! your friends, your acquaintance, your relatives, who, but yeſterday, were in full health and ſpirits; who, not twenty-four hours ſince, were engaged in the active concerns or amuſements of life, as we ourſelves were, unconſcious of what lay concealed under the dark mantle of Providence, as their deſtined lot, unſuſpicious of the fatal cataſtrophe that awaited them, now exhibit a ſtriking picture of the precarious tenure of life, and frailty of man! Behold! in a moment the ſlender thread is cut, the ſcene is changed, the ſable curtain drops, the ſhades of death ſurround them, and their exit is made from this tranſitory ſtage of action, to an eternal and unchangeable ſtate of exiſtence. How awful the tranſit, how ſudden the change!

How alarming the call, yet how ſalutary the admonition!—Hark!—methinks I hear theſe ſilent, yet emphatical monſters ſay, "be ye alſo ready."—Wide yawn the three graves full in our view, ready to receive their deſtined prey, reminding us that ſuch an houſe muſt one day be the tenement of all preſent; while the little hillocks on every ſide on which we walk, the covering of ſome departed fellow mortals, teach us

"To think as ſoft and ſad we tread,
"Above the venerable dead;
"Time was, like us they life poſſeſs'd,
"And time ſhall be, when we ſhall reſt."

Since it is a truth that it is appointed for all men once to die, and after that to come to judgment; ſince God hath ſaid, "Duſt thou art and to duſt "thou ſhalt return;" ſince we learn by the inſtances before us, that life is ſhort and uncertain, liable to extinction by the moſt ſudden and unexpected turns of Providence: ſurely it will be wiſe in us to liſten to the admonition we have this day received, which is even *now* loudly warning us to ſeek an intereſt in him who alone can deſtroy death! To prepare for that change which muſt ſurely come, and we know not how ſoon. Alas! How prone is man to put the day which he deems evil, far, far diſtant from him, as beautifully expreſſed by the inimitable Dr. Young.

"All men think all men mortal but themſelves,
"Themſelves, when ſome alarming ſhock of fate
"Strikes thro' their hearts the deep felt dread:
"But, their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,
"Soon cloſe."
"Where flies the ſhaft no trace is found;
"As from the wing, the ſky no ſcar retains,
"The parted wave, no furrow from the keel,
"So die the thoughts of death in human hearts."

May this, my friends, not be verified in us. But, O! may this ſolemnity make a laſting impreſſion on our ſpirits. It is a fearful thing to ruſh unprepared into the awful preſence of an holy God; for moſt ſurely judgment ſucceeds death, "when we muſt "all appear before the judgment ſeat of God, to "receive according to the things which we have "done, whether they be good, or whether they be "evil." Repent, therefore, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; the means of preparation are before you; the goſpel is in your poſſeſſion, and the path marked out: ſo plainly is it delineated, that he who runs may read. An intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt the King of Saints, will diſarm death, will deſpoil him of his ſting, "for the ſting of death is "ſin; but glory be to God, who giveth us the "victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." To the chriſtian, death hath loſt its terrific appearance, he is no more the king of terrors; but the ſervant of our heavenly Father, ſent to undreſs his children, and put them to reſt in the boſom of the bleſſed Jeſus! Though the bodies of the Saints are committed to their graves, yet to ſuch as ſleep in Jeſus, the grave has become a ſweet and quiet reſting place; he has made it eaſy to them, by his having firſt lain in it himſelf. "Here the weary are at "reſt, and the wicked ceaſe from troubling." The body is committed to the duſt, for there is in the body of the greateſt ſaints, a contracted corruptibility and diſhonour: this, O grave! mayeſt thou ſwallow up for ever as thy proper prey; but know alſo, that in the body of the weakeſt believer, there was a ſoul united to Jeſus Chriſt, to which it has ſtill a relation, and to whom thou muſt one day give it up to be reunited; when that prophetic apoſtrophe muſt be accompliſhed, "O death, I will "be thy plague, O grave, I will be thy deſtruction!" and that triumphant ſong ſhall be chaunted over thee, "O death, where is thy ſting, O grave, where

" is thy victory!" We expect the bodies of the saints from thee, not as thou receivedst them. They were sown natural bodies, but shall be raised spiritual; they were sown corruptible, shall be raised incorruptible: were sown in weakness, shall be raised in power! No more pains, no more complaints, no more seeds of mortality, no more death; but in that joyful morn shall the saints appear in all their beauty, far transcending the fairest of the sons and daughters of men. They shall be adorned with the comeliness of their Lord, and clothed with the beauties of his holiness, having their bodies fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ, which is the sum of all excellency, and expressive of more real dignity and glory, than the most finished eulogium. Are these the peculiar privileges of the righteous? Behold! those who die in the Lord, lay down in peace, and arise with the brightness of the morning! " Mark " the upright man, for the end of that man is peace." Death can never surprize him, being always ready; for the passage of Jordon leads to the possession of Canaan. Who would not wish to die the death of the righteous, and have his last end like his? Live then, the life of the godly, and you shall enjoy communion with Jehovah here, shall be blessed with his presence through your pilgrimage, shall share the divine consolations of his spirit, which are neither few nor small, in this life, and the full fruition of him forever in the world to come. Happy art thou, O redeemed of the Lord, for thou art perfectly secure, whether the hour cometh at the cock-crowing, at mid-day, in the evening, or at midnight; whether you may be called hence by a lingering sickness, a short illness, or a sudden and unexpected stroke, to which we are each of us hourly liable, and the event this day as probable to us, as yesterday to our departed friends, who now are no more as to this life, suddenly have bid an eternal adieu to

all their connections, their enjoyments, and all temporal things. But, whether we are to be ſummoned hence in a ſudden or a gradual manner, by a fortuitous event, or the common courſe of nature; the end is ſure, and the deſtination not leſs certain. Therefore, wiſdom crieth aloud, and underſtanding putteth forth her voice; the grave openeth its mouth and the dead ſpeak, ſaying, "prepare to "meet thy God." May the ſubjects of the late awful Providence now before you, ſeriouſly affect your minds, and the monition ſink deep into your hearts! Then ſhall you be familiar with death, and hold converſe with the grave! You will improve your time, and prepare for eternity. You will meditate on the law of the Lord, and delight in his ſtatutes. You will triumph over a vain world, and finally riſe to the manſions of eternal Glory. *Amen.*